

THE SO-CALLED GENERIC NAMES OF EHRHART'S PHY-  
TOPHYLACIUM.

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IN discussing the generic names available for *Alsinopsis* (RHODORA 21: 10. 1919), Fernald remarked: "*Leptophyllum* Ehrh. Beitr. iv. 147 (1789), was based on *Arenaria tenuifolia* L." In an extended footnote he added: "Surely if *Dryopteris* satisfies the American Code as good publication of a genus, *Leptophyllum* Ehrh. Beitr. iv. 147 (1789) based, as stated, on *Arenaria tenuifolia* L., is admirably published. Some other generic names similarly published on the same or adjacent pages, which by the American Code, but not by the International Rules, should be taken up are

PHAEOCEPHALUM Ehrh. l. c., 146 (1789), based on *Schoenus fuscus* L. = RYNCHOSPORA Vahl (1806).

HYDROPHILA Ehrh. l. c. (1789), based on *Tillaea aquatica* L., which was also the type of TILLAEASTRUM Britton (1903).

TRICHOPHYLLUM Ehrh. l. c. 147 (1789), based on *Scirpus acicularis* L. = ELEOCHARIS R. Br. (1810).

MONANTHIUM Ehrh. l. c. 148 (1789), based on *Pyrola uniflora* L., which was the type of MONESES Salisb. (1821).

HELICTONIA Ehrh. l. c. (1789), based on *Ophrys spiralis* L., which was also the type of IBIDIUM Salisb. (1812).

AETOPTERON Ehrh. l. c. (1789), based on *Polypodium aculeatum* L. = POLYSTICHUM Roth (1799)."

Acting upon this hint, but without referring to it, House has more recently, in two papers,<sup>1</sup> taken up a number of these so-called "generic" names of Ehrhart and for the first time combined specific names with them. He remarks in his earlier paper, "This article deals with a set of generic names published by Friedrich Ehrhart in 1789," and in the later one, "The genus *Aetopteron* forms No. 78 in Ehrhart's list of new genera." On the strength of these assertions, some seven new generic names and above a hundred new combinations have been added to the increasing burden of plant synonymy, without the slightest possible excuse.

<sup>1</sup>A consideration of certain genera proposed by Ehrhart. Am. Midl. Nat. 6: 200-207. My 1920.—The genus *Aetopteron*, Ehrhart. Am. Fern Jour. 10: 88: 89. S 1920.



Briefly stated, the plain facts are these. Ehrhart prepared for distribution certain sets of exsiccatae of flowering plants, which he issued in "decades" under the title "*Phytophylacium*." When ten of these decades had appeared, he published in his *Beiträge* (4: 145–150. 1789), under the title "*Index Phytophylacii Ehrhartiani*," a list of the hundred species contained in them. To each species is assigned a single name, followed by its current binary one. For example, the first five in the list are as follows:

- "1. *Phaeocephalum*. *Schoenus fuscus* Linn.
2. *Leucocoma*. *Eriophorum alpinum* Linn.
3. *Orthostachys*. *Elymus europaeus* Linn.
4. *Stygaria*. *Juncus stygius* Linn.
5. *Dicodon*. *Linnaea borealis* Linn."

At first glance these look much as if they were intended as generic names accompanied by the designation of a type species for each, but even a superficial examination of the list would suggest to almost any one the need of extreme caution in adopting such an interpretation. For instance, it is a conspicuous fact that every species of the hundred is assigned a monomial designation. Fourteen are species of *Carex*, which neither Ehrhart nor any one else has ever attempted to separate generically; five were species of *Ophrys*, five of *Serapias*, four of *Bromus*, and ten of *Lichen*, without anything to indicate that Ehrhart considered them generically distinct. Furthermore, the apparent substitution of *Dicodon* for *Linnaea*, *Hippopodium* for *Buxbaumia*, and *Quaternella* for his own *Mönchia*, were wholly at variance with the nomenclatural practice even of that day. How inexcusable, then, is it for any one to assume that these were generic names without even reading what Ehrhart himself has to say about them.

To the list is appended this note (here freely translated): "I must here omit, for lack of space, the locality where each plant was collected. I have reprinted, however, my 'nomina usualia.' Not that it seems to me to be of very much consequence, since they are nothing but an attempt to assign to each plant a name that may be used for it alone, without an accompanying generic one, as suggested by Oeder in his 'Einleitung zur Kräuterkenntniss' § 141; but that a certain man by the name of Dahl, who is a particular friend of the idea, might derive some amusement from it, and that I might accommodate him."



The suggestion of Oeder,<sup>1</sup> to which Ehrhart refers, is (also freely translated) as follows: "There may be proposed, for common non-botanical conversational use, names which we may call nomina 'usualia,' always independent names, having no connection or relation to classification, to genus, or to specific relationship, but one for each species, relating to itself alone. It will be permissible, then, for species known by these 'nomina usualia' to be arranged freely by botanists in their respective systems and transferred at will, to be associated in genera and to be reclassified, for under all these changes of methods each name would remain unchanged."

Had Ehrhart foreseen the confusion in botanical nomenclature that might be caused by his innocent "nomina usualia," he would probably have refrained from his attempt to amuse and accommodate his friend Dahl. But surely he did all that could be expected from him in the way of explaining his intent, and warning later botanists away from the pitfall into which some have blindly walked. It is evident, however, that a fresh warning is needed, particularly as many of Ehrhart's "nomina usualia" have found their way as generic names into modern nomenclators, and we have with us many who are willing to accept without question the thousands of errors that are inevitable in works of that character.

Of course the preceding discussion should not be misinterpreted as a criticism of the validity of the various generic names proposed as such by Ehrhart in his other writings. His concept of genera and species, and the nomenclature of these categories, was by no means hazy or erratic.

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PANICUM ALBEMARLENSE IN CONNECTICUT.—Only two stations are given for *Panicum albemarlense* in the Connecticut Catalogue, namely Waterford and Southington. It therefore seems worth while to report the species from Franklin. The particular locality where it was found is a short, low gravel ridge. This is in fact a veritable *Panicum* "garden." There are a few *Lecheas* there, it is true, (*L. villosa*, *L. intermedia*, *L. tenuifolia* and *L. maritima interior*), but *Panicums* make up the bulk of the vegetation. The following species occur here: *P. tennesseense*, *P. albemarlense*, *P. implicatum*,

<sup>1</sup>Elem. Bot. 137. 1764.